

Final Recommended Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington: FWC Workshop Briefing

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Outline

- EIS/Plan process
- Overview
 - Biological and Legal Status
 - Federal Status Review
 - Elements of Plan
- Post De-Listing Management
- Possible Revisions for FWC Consideration



WDFW Wolf Plan EIS Steps

Steps	Date
Initiated EIS/Plan; Wolf Working Group appointed	January 2007
7 public scoping meetings held around state	August 2007
Held 8 meetings with the Wolf Working Group	Feb 2007- Aug 2008
Preliminary draft plan reviewed by 43 experts	August 2008 – Oct 2008
Draft EIS prepared; held 9 th meeting with WWG	Nov 2008 – Sept 2009
Draft EIS/Plan issued for 95-day public review	Oct 5, 2009 – Jan 8, 2010
Held 12 public meetings around the state	Oct 20 – Nov 10, 2009
Contracted a blind peer review of the Draft Plan	Oct 2009 – Jan 2010
WDFW analyzed and addressed comments	2010 - 2011
Held 10 th meeting with WWG	June 2011
Completed Final EIS/Recommended Plan	July 28, 2011

Commission Workshops

Steps	Date
Plan/EIS Presented to FWC - Olympia	August 4, 2011
FWC Workshop - Ellensburg	August 29, 2011
FWC Workshop - Olympia	October 6, 2011
FWC Workshop - Spokane	November 3, 2011
FWC Finalize/Adopt Wolf Plan (Olympia)	December 2-3, 2011

Overview of Plan

- Serves as the state recovery plan (WAC 232-12-297)
- Needs to have scientifically credible standards for a recovered wolf population: numbers, distribution, persistence
- Addresses conflicts - key to recovering and managing wolves
- Many components of the plan are interconnected
- Plan uses best available science; where uncertainty exists, errs on side of caution
- A separate plan will be developed when they are delisted

Definitions



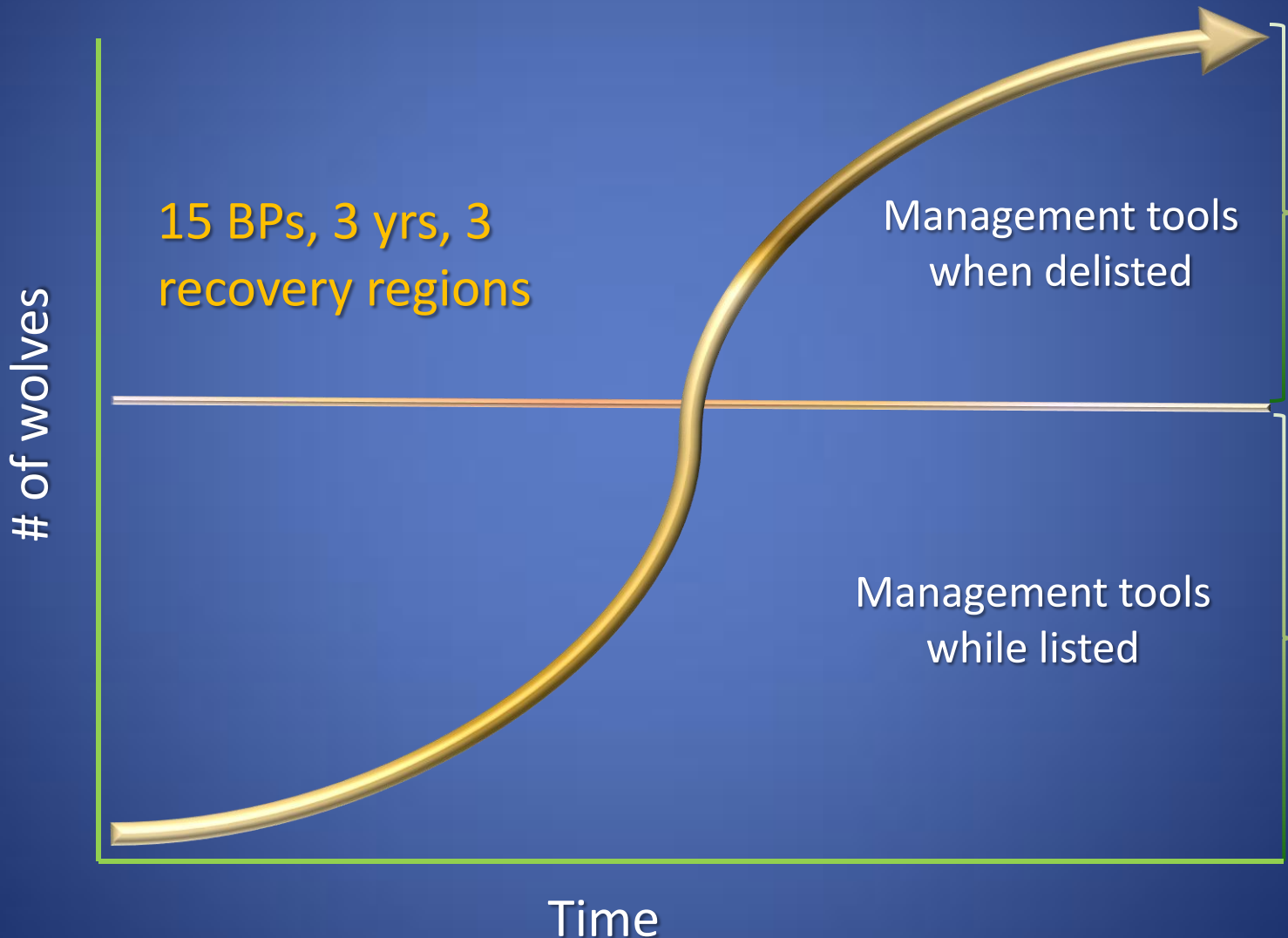
- Pack: *2 or more wolves traveling together*
- Successful Breeding Pair: *male and female raising 2 or more pups until Dec 31*



Confusion about “Management”

- Common misperception that wolves will not be “managed” until after delisting
- Wolves are being managed today
- Plan addresses management during listing stages
- Tools differ, flexibility increases as population grows and recovers
 - Persistence modeling of lethal removal actions
- Consistency with federal law where federally listed
- Once in the delisted phase, need appropriate management that will not cause re-listing

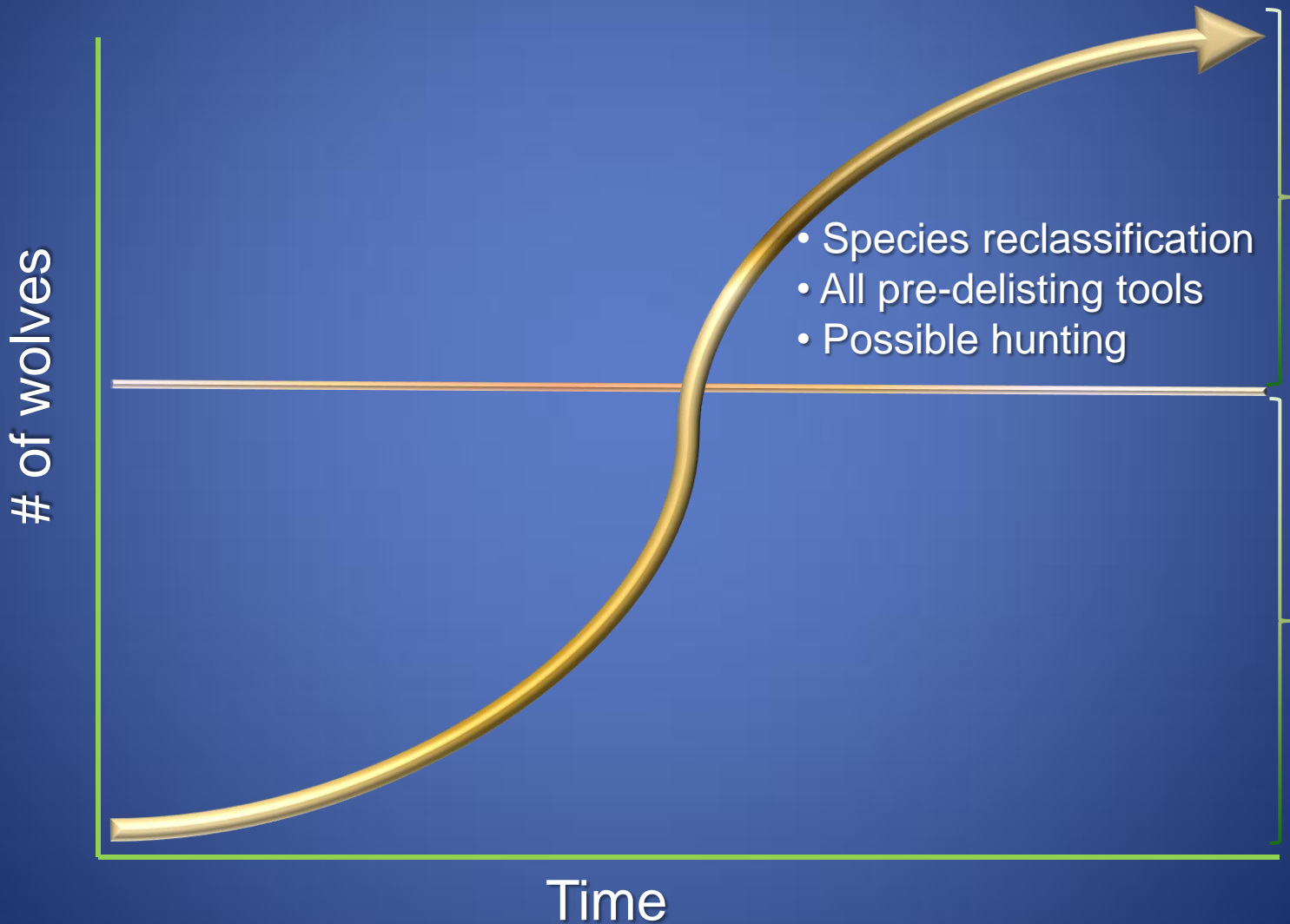
Management tools during listing stages and when delisted



Management tools during listing phases and when delisted



Future plans will address management tools when delisted



Biological and Legal Status and Federal DPS Review

History in Washington

- Native species, once common in the state
- Estimated that ~ 2,300- 5,000 wolves were in Washington prior to settlement
- ~ 15,000 pelts traded at 4 WA posts 1827-1859
- Exterminated by 1930s (trapping, shooting, poisoning)



Wolves are returning to Washington



Recovery of populations
in adjacent states &
provinces producing
dispersers into WA



Confirmed Packs in WA



Legal Status



- Federal listed 1974
- State listed 1980
- No state recovery plan; WA was not included in federal plan for NRM

Federal Status

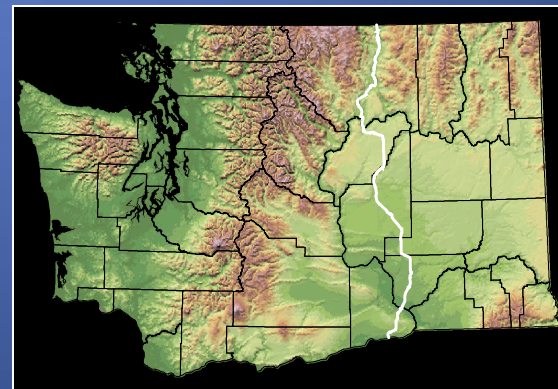


State Status - Endangered



USFWS Status Review

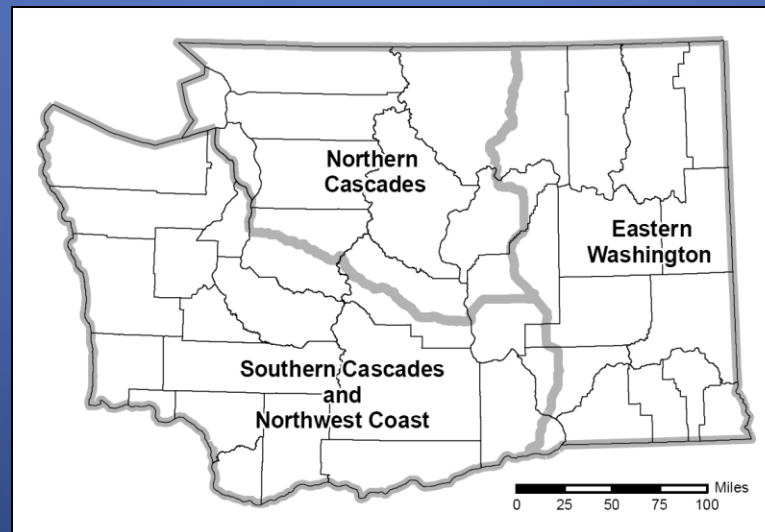
- USFWS currently conducting a status review of wolf populations in the Lower 48
 - Per settlement, outcome expected in Feb, 2012
- What about western two-thirds of Washington?
 - NRM DPS western boundary moved further west?
 - Creation of Pacific NW DPS (including portions of OR, CA)?
- If new DPS designated, what is status?
 - ESA Section 4.d considers the adequacy of “existing regulatory mechanisms”



Review of Plan Elements

Recovery Objectives for Plan

- 15 Successful breeding pairs (male and female with 2 pups that survive to Dec 31) for delisting
- Distribution in a significant portion of the range (in 3 recovery regions)
- Maintained for 3 consecutive years on the landscape



Recovery Objectives

Plan Element	Final Preferred Alternative
# Recovery regions	3
# Breeding pairs	6, 12, 15
Threatened (6)	2 E WA 2 N Cascades 2 S Cascades/NW Coast
Sensitive (12)	4 E WA 3 N Cascades 5 S Cascades/NW Coast
Delisted (15)	5 E WA 4 N Cascades 6 S Cascades/NW Coast

Strategies to Reduce and Address Livestock Conflicts

- Proactive measures
- Non-lethal
- Lethal control
- Compensation



Addressing Livestock Conflicts

Element	Draft Preferred	Final Preferred
Proactive measures to reduce depredation	WDFW would hire wolf specialists; duties would include working with livestock operators to provide technical assistance	WDFW will provide technical assistance to livestock operators to implement proactive measures
Non-lethal harassment	Allowed with a permit	Allowed with a permit
Lethal control by state or federal agency	Allowed, consistent with federal and state law	Allowed, consistent with federal and state law WDFW may consider issuing a permit to a landowner if WDFW does not have the resources to address
Lethal control by livestock owners of wolves involved in repeated depredations	Allowed with permit on private, public when wolves reach Sensitive status	Allowed with permit on private, public when wolves reach Sensitive status

Livestock Conflicts, cnt'd.

Element	Draft Preferred	Final Preferred
Lethal take of wolves in the act of attacking (biting, wounding, killing) livestock	<p>Allowed on private land when wolves reach Threatened status.</p> <p>Would be reconsidered if used inappropriately or more than 2 mortalities occur under the provision in a year.</p>	<p>Allowed by livestock owners, regardless of listing status, on private land, with an issued permit, after documented depredation in the area and efforts to resolve the problem have been deemed ineffective.</p> <p>Would trigger a review by WDFW if used inappropriately or if 2 mortalities occur under this provision in a year. WDFW would evaluate the circumstances of the mortalities and determine if it would continue issuing permits.</p>

Compensation for Confirmed Losses

Element	Draft Preferred	Final Preferred
Payment for confirmed livestock depredation	<p>Twice the full value for each confirmed depredation on grazing sites of 100 or more acres.</p> <p>Full value for each confirmed depredation on sites of less than 100 acres.</p> <p>Losses covered on both private and public lands.</p>	<p>On grazing sites of ≥ 100 acres, and where the agency determines that it would be difficult to survey the entire acreage, full current market value for two animals for each confirmed depredation.</p> <p>It would not include double payment if all other animals are accounted for.</p> <p>On sites of < 100 acres, full current market value for each confirmed depredation. Losses covered on both private and public lands.</p>

Compensation for Probable Losses

Element	Draft Preferred	Final Preferred
Payment for probable livestock depredation	<p>Full value for each probable depredation on grazing sites of 100 or more acres.</p> <p>Half the value for each probable depredation on sites of less than 100 acres.</p> <p>Losses covered on both private and public lands.</p>	<p>On grazing sites of ≥100 acres, and where the agency determines that it would be difficult to survey the entire acreage, half the current market value for two animals for each confirmed depredation.</p> <p>Would not include double payment if all other animals are accounted for.</p> <p>On sites of < 100 acres, half the current market value for each confirmed depredation. Losses covered on both private and public lands.</p>

Strategies to Address Ungulate Interactions

- Plan addresses actions to take if WDFW determines wolves are a primary limiting factor for at-risk ungulate populations (zonal management, if wolves > recovery objective in that recovery area)
- Non-lethal and lethal could be considered; prioritize non-lethal during recovery stages



Plan's Definition of At-Risk Ungulate Population

- Any federal or state listed ungulate population or any ungulate population for which it is determined to have declined 25% or more below management objectives for three or more years and population trend analysis predicts a continued decline.



Post De-Listing Management

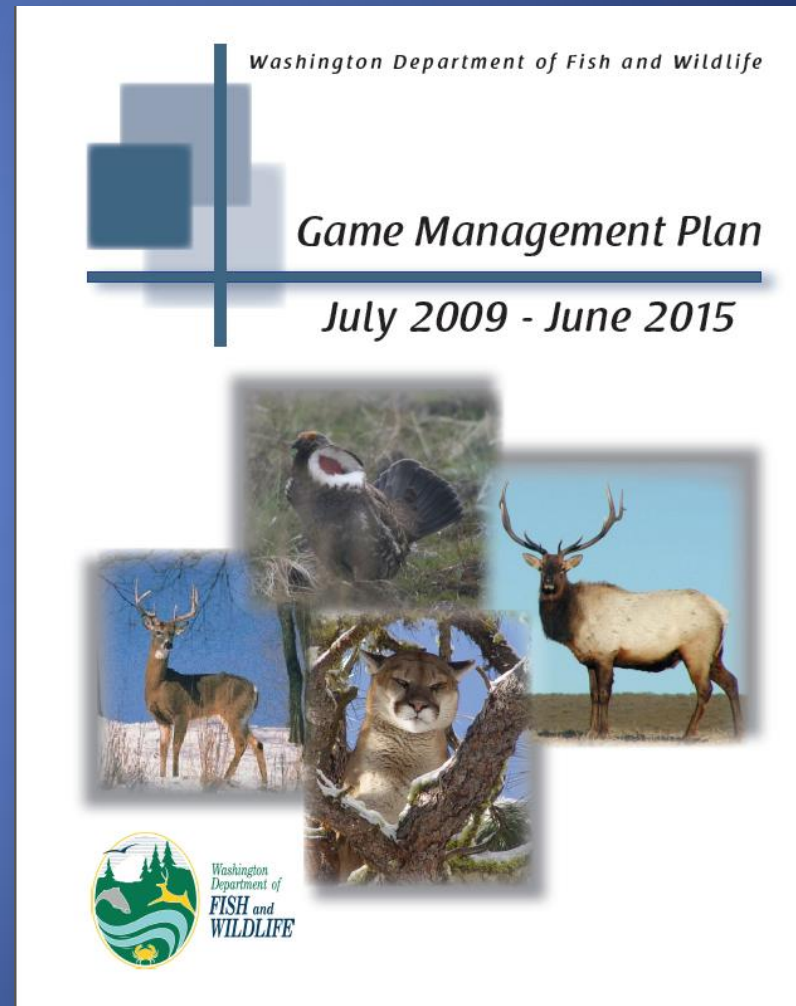
What happens after delisting?

- Scope of FEIS/plan is through de-listing
- As noted in the Plan, we anticipate recommending that wolves become a game species



What happens after delisting?

- New game species plan implemented after delisting
- Facilitated through FWC public process; SEPA

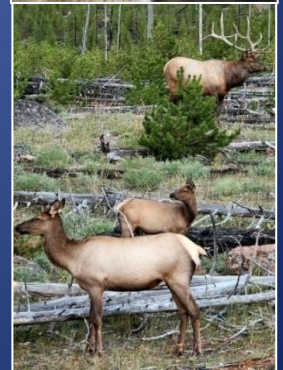
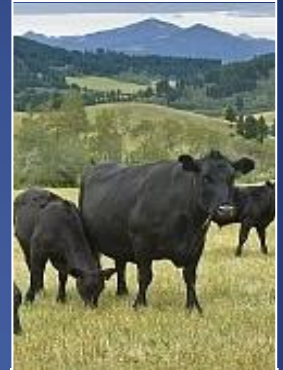


Elements of a Post De-Listing Management Plan

- Goals:
 - Preserve, protect, perpetuate wolves to ensure healthy, productive populations
 - Minimize threats to public safety and property damage
 - Manage for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes; including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing, and photography
 - Manage for sustainable population and harvest opportunity
 - Improve our understanding of potential impacts to ungulate populations

Elements of a Post De-Listing Management Plan

- Population Status
 - ✓ Monitor populations—How and What
 - ✓ Wolf Management Zones
- Population management objectives
 - ✓ Match population objective to zone
- Harvest guidelines
 - ✓ Address chronic conflict areas
 - ✓ Limited recreational opportunity
- Wolf-livestock conflict strategies
- Wolf-ungulate conflict strategies
- Outreach and Education



Possible Revisions for FWC Consideration

Recovery Objectives

Plan Element	Draft Preferred Alternative (10/09)	Final Preferred Alternative (7/11)	Possible Revisions
Sensitive (12 SBPs for 3 yrs)	2 E WA 2 N Cascades 5 S Cascades/NW Coast 3 anywhere in state	4 E WA 3 N Cascades 5 S Cascades/NW Coast	7/11 language Or 4 E WA 4 N Cascades 4 S Cascades/NW Coast
Delisted (15 SBPs for 3 yrs)	2 E WA 2 N Cascades 5 S Cascades/NW Coast 6 anywhere in state	5 E WA 4 N Cascades 6 S Cascades/NW Coast And If 18 SBPs in any one year, could initiate process; needs distribution and obj met for 3 yrs	7/11 language Or 4 in E WA 4 in N Cascades 4 in S Cascades/NW Coast 3 anywhere in state And/or 18 SBPs (4/4/4/6) in 1 yr, could initiate delisting process

Addressing Livestock Conflicts

Plan Element	Draft Preferred Alternative (10/09)	Final Preferred Alternative (7/11)	Possible Revisions
Lethal control by state or federal agency	Allowed during all listed statuses and after delisting, consistent with federal law.	<p>Allowed during all listed statuses and after delisting, consistent with federal law.</p> <p>During all listed statuses, WDFW may consider issuing a permit to a livestock owner to conduct lethal control on private land they own or lease if WDFW does not have the resources to address control.</p>	<p>Allowed during all listed statuses and after delisting, consistent with federal law.</p> <p>During all listed statuses, WDFW may consider issuing a permit to a livestock owner to conduct lethal control if WDFW does not have the resources to address control.</p>

Addressing Livestock Conflicts

Plan Element	Draft Preferred Alternative (10/09)	Final Preferred Alternative (7/11)	Possible Revisions
Lethal take of wolves in the act of attacking (biting, wounding, killing) livestock	<p>Allowed by livestock owners on private land they own or lease when wolves reach Threatened status.</p> <p>WDFW may reconsider if inappropriate use.</p>	<p>Allowed by livestock owners on private land they own or lease at all listed statuses, with an issued permit, after documented depredation in the area.</p> <p>WDFW may reconsider if inappropriate use.</p>	<p>July 28, 2011 language</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Allowed by livestock owners on private land they own or lease and public grazing allotments at all listed statuses, with an issued permit, after documented depredation in the area.</p> <p>WDFW may reconsider if inappropriate use.</p>

Wolf-Ungulate Management (10/09 and 7/11)

- Oct, 2009:
 - After wolves are delisted, if research determines that wolf predation is a limiting factor for at-risk ungulate populations, could consider moving of wolves, lethal control, or other control techniques in localized areas.
- July, 2011:
 - During any listed status, if the Department determines that wolf predation is a primary limiting factor for at-risk ungulate populations and the wolf population in that recovery region is healthy (i.e., it exceeds the delisting objectives for that recovery region), it could consider moving of wolves, lethal control, or other control techniques in localized areas.

Wolf-Ungulate Management (Possible Revisions)

- July 2011 language
- or:
- During any listed status, if the Department determines that wolf predation is a primary limiting factor for at-risk ungulate populations and the wolf population in that recovery region is greater than 4 successful breeding pairs, it could consider moving of wolves, lethal control, or other control techniques in localized areas.

Definition of “At-Risk Ungulate Population” (7/28/11)

- For the purposes of this plan, an at-risk ungulate population is any federal or state listed ungulate population (e.g., Selkirk Mountain woodland caribou, Columbian white-tailed deer), or any ungulate population for which it is determined to have declined 25% or more below management objectives for three or more years and population trend analysis predicts a continued decline. For populations for which numeric estimates and/or management objectives are not currently available, it will not be possible to use a specific threshold to assess a need for management action. Instead WDFW will use other sources of information related to the population, such as harvest trends, hunter effort trends, sex and age ratios, and others.

Definition of “At-Risk Ungulate Pop’n” (Possible Revision)

- For the purposes of this plan, an at-risk ungulate population is any federal or state listed ungulate population (e.g., Selkirk Mountain woodland caribou, Columbian white-tailed deer). An at-risk population would also include ungulates that have experienced a decline below the objective for the population management unit and evidence suggests a continued decline. In ungulate populations where estimates are regularly calculated, if a decline greater than 25% below the population management objective is detected, the department would consider taking management action. In ungulate populations without numeric estimates and/or without management objectives the department will not use a specific threshold to assess a need for management action. Instead WDFW will use other sources of information related to the population, such as harvest trends, hunter effort trends, sex and age ratios, and others.

Questions and Discussion